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presence of a patronymic suffix in early Russian tribal names indicates that these tribes actually passed through a stage when membership depended on kinship, but the attachment of the same suffix to place names also implies that the original implication had been forgotten before the historical period.

Prior to the evolution first of a commercial and subsequently of an official ruling class, the primitive Slavic population was divided into three distinguishable strata. At the lowest point in the scale stood the slaves, composed of captives taken in war, men who had lost their freedom for debt, and descendants of slave parents. At least in their early history, the attitude of the Slavs toward their slaves was exceedingly mild. Above the slaves stood the great group of freemen, governed by the elders of their communities and later by tribal chieftains supported by a council of elders.

Polygamy and concubinage were common to all primitive Slavs. In spite of the evidence for considerable promiscuity, a sense of the sanctity of marriage as a permanent tie is also demonstrated by early accounts of pagan Slavic wives who committed suicide upon the death of their husbands, so that the fidelity of the Slavic women was almost universally commented on with favor by foreign observers. Survivals of primitive custom among the Russian peasantry down to modern times indicate nevertheless that great freedom was allowed both sexes prior to marriage. The Slavic women enjoyed no equality in the household, though a surviving widow was authorized to take her husband's place as head of the family. Marriage by capture or by purchase was common Slavic practice.

In the course of their history, even before the dispersion, the Slavs were exposed to a series of foreign influences, especially Iranian and Germanic, which rapidly placed at their service the techniques common to adjacent ethnic groups. Linguistic evidence demonstrates that the mass of the Slavs, like the German and the Baltic peoples, was familiar with iron, gold, silver, and lead from the earliest times, at least from the second half